

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 02088 261235Z

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2088

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C O R R E C T E D COPY (FOR TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS PBFOR, VS

SUBJECT: AIR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

PERSONAL FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR MURPHY,
AID, AND MILLER, EA

1. THE FOLLOWING NOTE, CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL, DATED FEBRUARY 24
WAS RECEIVED TODAY FROM PRIME MINISTER KHIEM. COMMENTS WILL
FOLLOW.

2. BEGIN TEXT: SAIGON, FEBRUARY 24, 1975

SO 440A-THT/VP

HIS EXCELLANCY AMB. GRAHAM MARTIN

UNITED STATES EMBASSY

SAIGON

DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR:

MAY I CONFIRM TO YOU BY THIS LETTER INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY
CONVEYED TO YOU ORALLY ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CONTRACT AIR TRANSPORTATION

OPERATIONS WITHIN VIET-NAM AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THE PRESENT
AIR AMERICA CONTRACTS ON JUNE 30 OF THIS YEAR.

IT IS THE DECISION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VIET-NAM THAT,
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UPON EXPIRATION OF THE PRESENT AIR AMERICA CONTRACTS, NO FURTHER

CONTRACTS WILL BE PERMITTED FOR THE PROVISION BY FOREIGN AIR CARRIERS EITHER OF AIR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES WITHIN VIET-NAM, OR FOR THE PROVISION OF AIR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES ELSEWHERE BY FOREIGN COMPANIES WHICH WOULD BE BASED IN VIET-NAM.

FOLLOWING THE ATTACKS ON THE CIA AND AIR AMERICA IN THAILAND WE HAVE NARROWLY AVERTED SERIOUS OPEN ATTACKS ON THE GOVERNMENT BY ELEMENTS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHO HAVE CRITICIZED WHAT THEY ALLEGE TO BE AN ABROGATION OF VIETNAMESE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY BY PERMITTING AIR AMERICA TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE WITHIN VIET-NAM. SUCH ATTACKS WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE OF NO ADVANTAGE TO EITHER OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND WE HAVE MUTED THIS CRITICISM BY QUIETLY POINTING OUT THE IMPENDING DISSOLUTION OF AIR AMERICA ON JUNE 30.

IN THE FUTURE FLIGHT OPERATIONS IN VIET-NAM WILL BE LIMITED TO AIR VIET- NAM WHICH WE BELIEVE WILL BE PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SERVICES, OR TO CONTINENTAL AIR SERVICES, INCORPORATED, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED TO FLY WITHIN VIET-NAM AND WHICH HAS A JOINT VENTURE ARRANGEMENT WITH AIR VIET-NAM. WE WOULD NATURALLY PREFER THAT ARRANGEMENTS BE MADE DIRECTLY WITH AIR VIET-NAM, BUT WE WOULD NOT OBJECT IF THE U.S. MISSION PREFERENCES TO CONTRACT DIRECTLY WITH CONTINENTAL AIR SERVICES, INCORPORATED. IN ANSWER TO YOUR FURTHER QUESTION, THE GOVERNMENT OF VIET-NAM DOES NOT INTEND TO PERMIT ANY FURTHER JOINT VENTURE ARRANGEMENTS WITH AIR VIET-NAM FOR THE PROVISION OF AIR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES WITHIN VIET-NAM BY FOREIGN AIR TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES.

SINCERELY YOURS,

TRAN THIEN KHIEM

END TEXT.
MARTIN

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